

REMARKS

Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of the present application in view of the foregoing amendments and in view of the reasons that follow.

Status of the Claims

Claims 4-6, 8-9, 12, 24, and 27-35 have been cancelled without prejudice. Claims 10, 11, 13, 14, 15, and 40 are currently being amended. After amending the claims as set forth above, Claims 1-3, 7, 10-11, 13-23, 25-26, and 36-42 are now pending in the present application.

Allowed Claims

In Section 3 of the Office Action, the Examiner allowed Claims 1-3, 7, 16-23, 25-26, 36-39, 41, and 42. Applicants thank the Examiner for the allowance of these claims.

Claims Indicated to be Allowable If Rewritten in Independent Form

In Section 4 of the Office Action, the Examiner stated that "Claims 13 and 15 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims."

Claims 13 and 15 previously depended from independent Claim 9. Each of Claims 13 and 15 has been rewritten in independent form to include all the limitations of the rejected base claim (Claim 9) and any intervening claims (none).

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and allowance of new independent Claims 13 and 15.

Claims Amended to Depend from Claims Indicated to be Allowable

In Section 2 of the Office Action, the Examiner stated that Claims 9-10, 14, and 40 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by, or in the alternative, under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being obvious over, U.S. Patent No. 6,210,382 issued to Hogg. Although the Examiner did not address Claim 11 in the Detailed Action section of the Office Action, the Office Action Summary indicated that Claim 11 also was rejected.

Claim 9 has been cancelled. Dependent Claims 10, 11, 14, and 40 have been amended. As amended, dependent Claims 10, 11, 14, and 40 now depend from new independent Claim 13. As discussed above, Claim 13 has been amended to be in a condition that the Examiner indicated would be allowable. Thus, as amended, dependent Claims 10, 11, 14, and 40 now depend from a claim that the Examiner indicated would be allowable.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and allowance of dependent Claims 10, 11, 14, and 40.

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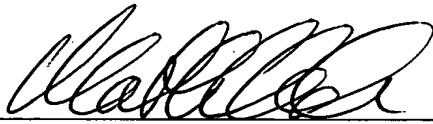
Applicants believe that the present application is now in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration of the application as amended is respectfully requested.

The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned by telephone if it is felt that a telephone interview would advance the prosecution of the present application.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees which may be required regarding this application under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16-1.17, or credit any overpayment, to Deposit Account No. 06-1447. Should no proper payment be enclosed herewith, as by a check being in the wrong amount, unsigned, post-dated, otherwise improper or informal or even entirely missing, the Commissioner is authorized to charge the unpaid amount to Deposit Account No. 06-1447. If any extensions of time are needed for timely acceptance of papers submitted herewith, Applicant hereby petitions for such extension under 37 C.F.R. §1.136 and authorizes payment of any such extensions fees to Deposit Account No. 06-1447.

Respectfully submitted,

Date 1/26/04

By 

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